

extraordinary professional career at Southern.

Throughout his long association with Southern, Mike held a number of positions which gave him a unique perspective of the university's operation. After being called upon twice to temporarily lead the university through difficult times, it was no surprise when Mike was appointed president of the university, a position which he held for 19 years until his retirement just 2 years ago.

Mike was the longest serving president in the Connecticut State University System. His inauguration as president was a unique event for the Southern community, as he became the first Southern Connecticut State University graduate to be named president of his alma mater, and the first graduate to become president of any university.

Southern flourished under Mike's direction, with new academic initiatives, prestigious awards for faculty and students, and national honors for Southern's sports teams. His vision and leadership brought the university increasing regional recognition for excellence in public higher education, leaving an indelible mark not only on the university, but on the surrounding communities of Greater New Haven as well.

Mike was as much a community leader as he was a leader in education. The New Haven Symphony Orchestra, New Haven's Long Wharf Theater, and the International Festival of Arts and Ideas are just a few of the organizations that benefited from Mike's generosity and volunteer efforts.

He also served as a board member of the Naugatuck Valley's Birmingham Utilities Water Company, the Ansonia Economic Development Commission, and the Connecticut Police Foundation.

Mike was a reflection of all that a civic leader should be. His involvement in so many local organizations, in addition to his commitment to public education and his students touched the lives of thousands, making all of the difference in their lives.

When someone is taken from your life so suddenly, it is often difficult to understand why such tragedy occurs.

My deepest sympathies go to Mike's wife of 43 years, Linda, his two children Kristen and Michael, and his three grandchildren.

Though he is no longer with us, the legacy that he has left, that of his commitment to opening the doors of opportunity for young people through education, will certainly continue to live in the hearts and minds of all who knew him.

Through those special memories, Michael Adanti will continue to inspire excellence.

□ 1715

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SODREL). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana

(Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURGESS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PAUL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PAUL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HELPING ALL OF HURRICANE KATRINA VICTIMS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WASSERMAN SCHULTZ. Mr. Speaker, I, like many Americans, am watching and praying that Hurricane Rita does not cause the same level of death and destruction as past Category 4 and 5 hurricanes like Andrew and Katrina.

Watching the death and destruction wrought by Katrina was truly heart-wrenching. What was even more unnerving was watching as many desperate victims stranded on their rooftops and surrounded by rising flood waters wrote makeshift signs begging for help. All they wanted was to be rescued and to have access to food and water. Those images have been stamped into the hearts and minds of Americans and people all over the world, and we must remind the administration that we will never forget.

How pretentious of our government to assume that everyone in the gulf coast region had the means to pick up at a moment's notice and hop in their cars and get on the highway towards safety. We must be aware of the ramifications of poverty in America and recognize that it is a real condition that many Americans face each and every day.

We cannot turn a blind eye to those trapped in a dismal socio-economic predicament that this administration's tax cuts for the wealthy and cuts in social programs have only exacerbated. Obviously, an investigation into the

slow response by FEMA is warranted, an accurate, unbiased, independent investigation, not one that will be led by the President's own domestic security advisor or a partisan committee that was formed here in this Congress.

Does that make you feel confident that the inquiry into this administration's performance in response to Katrina will be fair and accurate?

Only a fool would allow the very people who botched the rescue efforts to be the ones to go back and determine what went wrong, what went right, and what lessons we have learned from this tragedy.

People have died because of the inaction by their government. That much we certainly know is true. Now we must move forward with an investigation that is independent and one with subpoena power so that we can avoid the mistakes of Katrina. People have died, and we need to find out why. I know that if we do an investigation in name only, then people will die again, and they will continue to lack confidence in their government's ability to help them in their time of need. People will die in Florida. People will die in Texas. People will die in States throughout the hurricane region if we do not learn from the lessons of Katrina and ensure that our failures are not repeated.

I also want to remind people that people in Florida were victims of Hurricane Katrina as well. Hurricane Katrina's first victim was Florida as it struck Broward and Miami-Dade counties as a Category 1 storm on August 25, leaving hundreds of damaged or destroyed homes and nearly 11,000 individuals seeking assistance.

These are the people that FEMA has decided do not need help. This woman here is standing in water up to her knees. Her cars are damaged. They are late model cars, not fancy ones; and they are the result of Hurricane Katrina hitting Florida. This is representative of what FEMA has denied individual assistance and denied help to.

FEMA's response to this woman and to the woman standing among the remains of her house is that "you are on your own."

What was FEMA's response to all the families in Florida's requests for help? It is the same as it was to the people in New Orleans who died the first days that Katrina struck here: "you are on your own."

Last night we learned that Florida's appeal to FEMA to help our victims of Katrina in Florida was denied once again. My question for FEMA is, hurricanes do not know State boundaries, so why does FEMA?

Florida has been hit by six hurricanes over the past year and a half. Six. It is a constant plague that the residents of Florida deal with every single year, and the denial of aid to those in need is irresponsible and unconscionable. I introduced legislation this month that calls on FEMA to provide the much-needed assets to the

residents of Florida who are victims of Katrina. And I plead with my colleagues in Congress, do not turn your backs on the first victims of Katrina. Help those in need regardless of State line.

UPDATE ON IRAQ WAR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I recently returned from Iraq and Afghanistan and Qatar with my administrative assistant Dan Scandling, and I wanted to give a report on what I saw and some recommendations for the Bush administration.

This was my third time to Iraq, second time to Afghanistan. This time we went to Baghdad, Tikrit, and Kirkuk. I have now been to all parts of Iraq except to Kurdish areas in the north. On previous trips we have been to Baghdad, Nasaria, Alkoot twice, and Basra.

I want to begin by praising the military, both active duty, Reserve and National Guard and note their very, very positive attitude and great, great morale. I also want to publicly acknowledge and thank them and praise their families in noting the sacrifices that they and their families are making. I also want to offer condolences to the families who have lost loved ones.

Before I go any further, Mr. Speaker, I want to read a passage from an online journal being kept by a chaplain I met from Gloucester, Virginia during my recent trip. We were in the Kirkuk area and he sat across the table from me and he told me this story.

We then got this from his Web page. It is incredibly moving and describes the quality of the men and women serving in uniform. It is the hero mission from a trip report excerpted with permission from Army chaplain J.D. Morris, "Chronicles of Pastor J.D., January 27, 2005."

He begins by saying, "I was abruptly caught off guard today by one of the administrative privates from flight operations. He told me that the flight operations battle captain was looking for me. When I arrived to see the battle captain, he told me that I was given a hero mission for a young soldier who had died in battle only hours before.

"I had about 20 minutes to ready myself and go back by Blackhawk with Specialist Tussant to recover the soldier's body from his unit and to escort the hero to another base where he would be sent home to his family. I found Specialist Tussant, gathered my gear, and made my way to the flight line to board the aircraft. When I arrived everyone was as sober as I.

"I prayed over the aircraft, received our mission briefing, and then we departed. Once arriving to the location of the unit, I found the fallen soldier's unit neatly and sharply in formation

next to the landing zone. Their clothes were muddy, their faces were downcast, and immediately you could sense their pain.

"Tussant and I immediately departed the aircraft and hastily made our way to the chaplain of the unit who was standing with his soldiers like a good shepherd. In the chaplain's arm was a large red Bible embraced against his chest.

"The soldiers carefully opened the back of the vehicle and solemnly and with honor removed the fallen friend from the vehicle. The black body bag hung in the hands of his friends.

"Tussant and I stood next to the vehicle and rendered a slow salute. We slowly and reverently followed the soldiers and the fallen comrade to the aircraft. Once arriving to the helicopter with the blades still churning and whirling, we all carefully placed the hero in the aircraft.

"The crew chief in the aircraft gently situated the new crew member, our hero. We stopped and prayed. As I turned to my rear, I looked back to see the rest of America's sons. Their chaplain, Chaplain Fisher, came to me, embraced me tightly and with a shattered voice said, "Thank you for being here and escorting our friend part way home. Thank the unit for us for their help."

"I could only return his embrace, pat his shoulder, and look into his face. I then boarded the aircraft. We began our ascent. As the helicopter blades aggressively moved the air and we began to rise off the ground, I looked to my right out the window to see the unit being swayed by the turbulence but still saluting their fallen hero.

"As long as I could see the hero's unit standing at attention in the blowing turbulence, saluting their combat buddy, the soldiers remained standing steadfast, saluting and honoring our hero.

"I certainly will never forget this hero mission. I was very quiet back to Speicher, which was the base. I could only think of the pain a family back home was getting ready to experience. I prayed for the family."

Why did I go to Iraq for the third time and Afghanistan for the second time? I have been hearing a constant drumbeat of negative stories all summer, so I wanted to assess the situation again with my own eyes. Not believe the administration, nor believe the media, but I wanted to see firsthand for myself.

I saw a lot of positive things. Hospitals are being renovated. Schools are being built. Pipelines are being repaired. And the Iraqi Army is being trained.

In the comparison of my first visit and my second visit and this visit 2 weeks ago, I could see the improvement that was being made. Security, however, is still the greatest challenge we face. Who did I meet with? I met with Lieutenant General Petraeus, Ambassador Khalilzad, members of

Iraqi leadership including the President, Prime Minister, and the Speaker of the National Assembly, NBC officials, folks from the Department of Justice, Department of Transportation, Department of Energy, the USAID, and a lot of soldiers from privates to generals.

What were my impressions? There is real progress being made, but there are still concerns. Security remains our greatest challenge. The country is far from being safe. Everywhere I went I was escorted by a full complement of heavily armed soldiers and security personnel; and even when riding in an armored vehicle we had to wear body armor and a helmet.

Until we get security under control, our efforts to rebuild Iraq will continue to be a challenge. If embassy officials, USAID staff, NGOs, nongovernmental organizations, contractors and, yes, even the media cannot move around the country without the fear of being attacked, our efforts to bring peace to Iraq will be hampered.

I was told that many contractors remain unwilling to bid on work because of the level of violence that still exists and those who take on projects spend enormous sums of money on private security.

I was also told the World Bank, a critical element to rebuilding Iraq, had refused to send staff because of security concerns.

But I saw improvement from when I was there the first time, an improvement from when I was there the second time. And this administration has failed to articulate the improvement that has been made in Iraq.

To really understand what has happened in Iraq, you have to talk to the service men and women, God bless them, who are serving or who have served there. They are the fathers, the mothers, the sons, daughters who put their lives on the line in this war on terror. They are the neighbor down the street who has been called up for Reserve or Guard duty. They are the Federal employee who has volunteered for a temporary assignment.

I was struck by the number of people saying the Iraq they see on TV every day is not the Iraq they know. In the mess halls, throughout the mess halls there are six to eight television sets that are on every day to CNN. One junior officer told me that he does not even watch the news anymore. Most soldiers said they were bewildered on what they were seeing on the news compared to what they know was taking place firsthand in Iraq.

In speaking with our service personnel, I was troubled to learn our troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan are well aware of the media coverage of anti-war protests in America. Especially the vigil of Cindy Sheehan. The televisions, as I said, in the mess hall and sleeping quarters are turned to CNN and MSNBC and Fox. I had several soldiers express wonderment on what is taking place back home.